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POTTERY ANALYSES AS THE BASIS FOR STUDYING MIGRATIONS. THE CASE OF DANUBIAN POTTERY GROUPS FROM THE END OF 2ND MILLENNIUM BC

ABSTRACT: Spreading of the specific types of pottery was relatively often interpreted as a result of mass migrations in the tradition of Central European archaeology. Presented paper contains deliberations concerning the possibilities of distinguishing the traces of migrations and exchange contacts or other forms of diffusion, such as spreading of the so-called cultural package. It also presents a certain procedure of concluding about the migrations, founded on pottery analyses. The presented deliberations were illustrated with the case of spreading of the Danubian groups of pottery from the end of the 2nd millenium BC. Around the half of the 12th century BC described stylistic currents appeared in the whole Carpathian Basin and in many neighbouring territories, i.a. in southern Poland. This phenomenon was associated in many regions with complete disappearance of the earlier cultural traditions.

STRESZCZENIE: W tradycji archeologii środkowoeuropejskiej stosunkowo często zjawiska rozprzestrzenienia się pewnych rodzajów ceramiki interpretowane były jako wynik masowych migracji. W niniejszym artykule zawarte zostały rozważania dotyczące możliwości odróżnienia śladów migracji od kontaktów wymiennych czy też innych form dyfuzji, jak np. rozprzestrzeniania się tzw. pakietu kulturowego. Przedstawiona została również pewna procedura wnioskowania o migracjach w oparciu o analizy ceramiki. Prezentowane rozważania zostały zilustrowane przypadkiem naddunajskich grup ceramiki z końca II tys. przed Chr. Około połowy XII stulecia przed Chr. opisywane nurty stylistyczne rozprzestrzeniły się na całym obszarze Kotliny Karpackiej oraz na wielu sąsiadujących terytoriach, między innymi na obszarze Polski południowej. Zjawisko to w wielu regionach wiązało się z całkowitym zanikiem wcześniejszych tradycji kulturowych.

KEYWORDS: Late Bronze Age, Carpathian Basin, pottery analyses, style, migrations

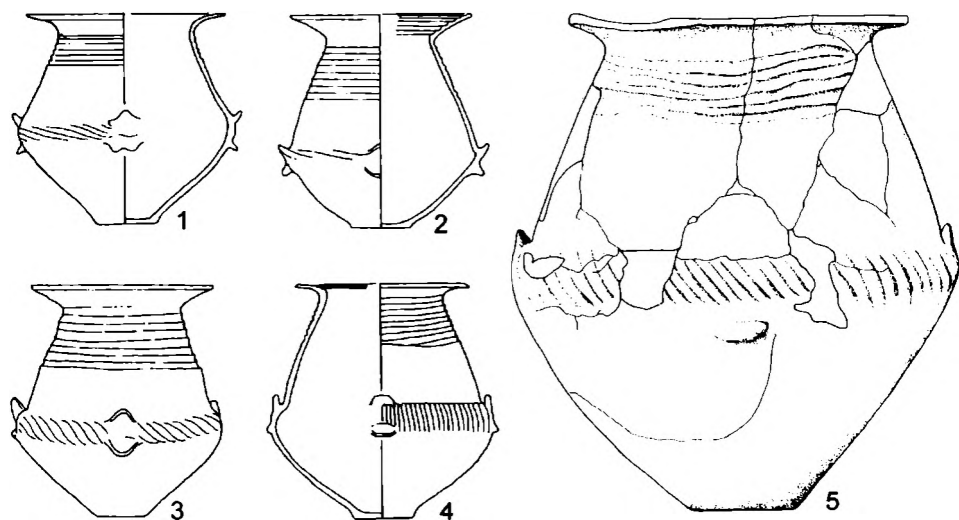


Fig. 2. A result of careful copying of a single model of a vessel – an example of the Belegiš II style pottery from different parts of south-eastern and central Europe: 1 – Opovo (Banat), 2 – Vajuga-Pesak (Iron Gate area), 3 – Trifești (Moldavia), 4 – Tiszacsege (middle Tisza basin), 5 – Kraków-Pleszów (western Little Poland). After Bukvić 2000 (1); Vasić 1995 (2); Levički 1994 (3); Szabó 2004 (4) and Bazielić 1984 (5)

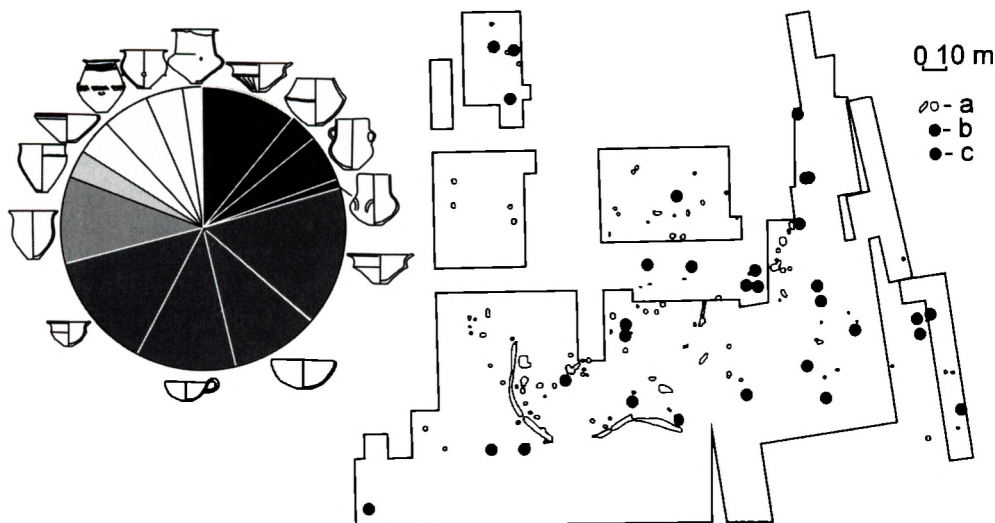


Fig. 3. Kraków-Pleszów, site 17. Plan of the excavated area (a – features of the Lusatian culture without precise dating, b – features of the early phase of Lusatian culture, c – features containing the “foreign” pottery groups; after Kogus 1984, modified) and a diagram showing the proportion between the number of complete vessels in the Silesian style of the early Lusatian culture (black), other “Lusatian” forms (gray) and “foreign” vessels’ types (white)

(Janowski 1966; 1968; Gedl 1998) and Warzyce (Czopek, Poradyło 2008). At the former, besides settlement features also a small cremation cemetery was discovered. The pottery material from both sites represents two stylistic currents developing south of the Carpathians: a current typical of the late phase of the Piliny culture from the Slovakia-Hungary borderland (further in the text called late-Piliny – Kyjatice style), and pottery type which spread widely in the 12th century from the territory of Slavonia and Vojvodina (further in the text called Belegiš II style – Fig. 2). There are no clear records suggesting the survival of pottery stylistics from the preceding period in this area. On the other hand, there are known vessels typical of the communities occupying at that time the middle San basin (the so called Tarnobrzeg group). Thus, the appearance of new pottery in the discussed area coincides in time with the end of development of earlier manufacture traditions and with emerging of new settlement complexes (and possibly abandoning the old ones) (Przybyła 2009: 181-200).

At the same chronological horizon, the situation in the area of the western Little Poland loesses is different. From this area, particularly from the precincts of Kraków, a group of sites attributed in principle to the early phase of the Lusatian culture was found (see the paper by J. Górski, in this volume), on which features containing “foreign” pottery forms were discovered. In majority, these vessels represent the Belegiš II style (Bazielich 1984; 1986; Przybyła 2005; 2009: 301-327). Less numerous are pottery forms typical of the early phase of the Middle Danubian Umfields (later in the text called the Velatice-Čaka style). With regard to both the coexistence of these two stylistic traditions and the presence of some particular vessel forms or the repetition of whole sets, the assemblages with “foreign” pottery find the best analogies in artifacts from the middle Tisza basin, which will be discussed later in this paper. Pottery revealing Transcarpathian features is a minority in the examined settlements in the Kraków region. The proportion between distinctive fragments of “foreign” pottery (fragments of faceted rims) and the chronologically corresponding distinctive fragments of the Lusatian culture vessels ranges from ca 1:4 to 1:2. Similar ratio applies to the number of features with “foreign” pottery as compared with pits of the Lusatian culture (Fig. 3). There are no indications that the former were located in any special place within the settlement. At the same time, however, it should be emphasized that in most pits belonging to this group the Belegiš II or Velatice-Čaka style pottery occurred in numbers significantly larger than in the Lusatian culture sherds. It seems that the appearance of assemblages with “foreign” pottery was an episodic phenomenon in the western Little Poland, limited only to the times corresponding to HaA period and it was rather not reflected in further cultural development of the area.

The third region, where in the 12th and 11th centuries one can trace vessels manufactured in the stylistics typical of the Tisza basin (late-Piliny – Kyjatice, Belegiš II, Gáva I and II styles), is the middle San basin, encompassed at that time by the settlement of the so-called Tarnobrzeg group. It seems that southern influences – and speaking more strictly, the appearance of bronze objects manufactured on the Tisza – were one of the factors which were “driving” cultural changes in the San basin in the 14th and 13th centuries. That was the period when the phenomenon described as the Tarnobrzeg group appeared (e.g. Blajer 1989; Blajer, Czopek, Kostek 1991; Czopek 1996: 110-116; 2002; Przybyła 2009: 265-283). Routes of connections established at that time between the

communities from the middle San basin and the Jasło-Krosno Basin (the latter populations being the intermediary agents in exchange with the centres located on the Tisza) could facilitate the northwards spread of the 12th and 11th century Transcarpathian stylistic patterns. However, the Tarnobrzeg group cemeteries yielded only single vessels, which could be considered as accurate copies of the Tisza region stylistics. Moreover, in closed assemblages they co-occurred together with local vessel forms. More frequent are local imitations, which only roughly (or only with regard to decoration) emulate the Transcarpathian model (Czopek 2003; Przybyła 2009: 283-300). At the same time it seems that “southern” influences in the Tarnobrzeg group pottery were much more long-lasting than in the case of the western Little Poland loesses.

Summarizing the above remarks, it can be stated that the same set of features of material culture (here: pottery), originating from the same home area, can appear as a “foreign” element in totally different contexts (Fig. 4). In the examples presented above, “foreign” pottery groups:

- were found in new settlement complexes, replacing the earlier occupation;
- occurred in isolated features, on the sites representing essentially indigenous cultural tradition;
- were represented mainly by local imitations of the “foreign” style.

While the first two cases can be, among other things, a result of mass migration, the latter should be interpreted rather as a result of long-lasting exchange contacts and accompanying migrations of individuals.

MIGRATIONS OR “CULTURAL PACKAGE”?

Diffusion of cultural information through the migration of its bearers is the basic conception, on which we predicate the interpretation of the spread of material culture patterns as resulting from migration. However, there also existed other possibilities of transmitting the “chaîne opératoire” accurately reproducing a given model of an object. It could happen, for example, when some elements from the domain of ideology would be attributed to certain material culture patterns. Thanks to the lasting reference to ideology, these patterns could avoid undergoing significant transformations (thus not becoming the imitations) and could be accurately copied over areas distant from the home area, despite being transmitted via “chain exchange” between the directly neighbouring communities.

It seems that such was the reasoning of Colin Burgess (1979: 309-312) when he formulated the “cultural package” conception. This conception was used first to explain the spread of the Bell Beaker culture and next in the Janusz Czebreszuk’s (1998; 2001) studies on the origin of the Trzciniec culture. The “cultural package” conception assumes the existence of a certain set of material culture elements, attributed to a specific ritual or custom. It is just the attractiveness of the “cultural package” ideological aspect which caused its acceptance by successive communities or certain specific groups within those communities (the so-called “secret associations”). The “cultural package” defined in this way would spread across the traditional ethnic and cultural boundaries, undergoing only relatively small modifications. No significant transformations should be also visible within the socio-cultural systems encompassed by spreading of the “package”, particularly in their aspects

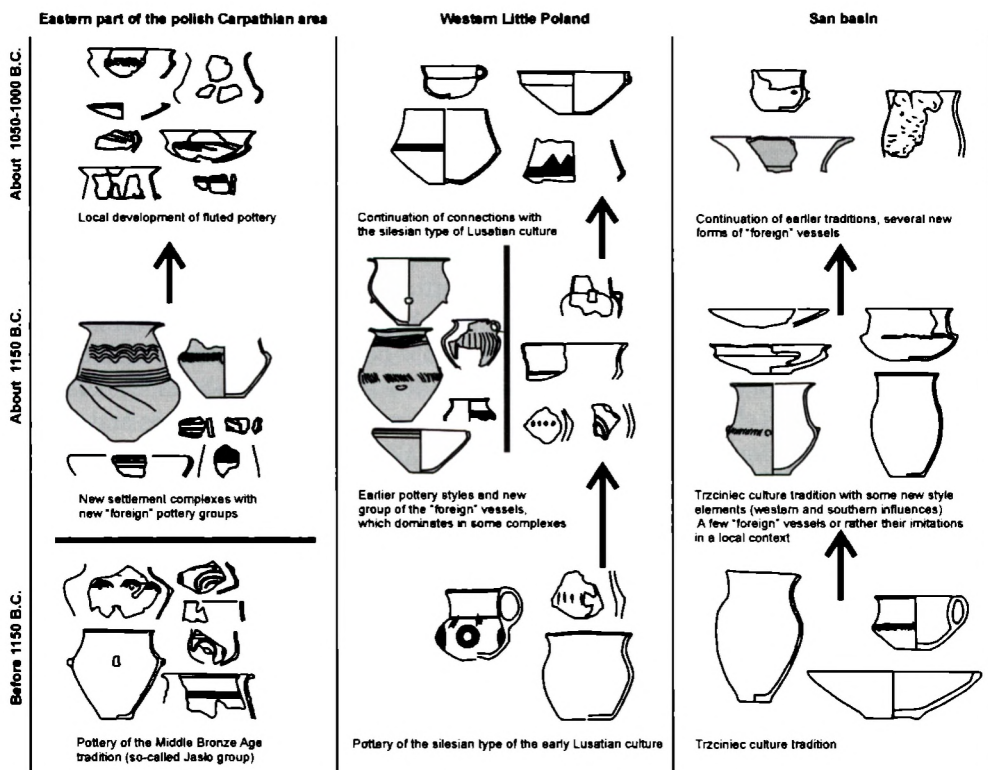


Fig. 4. Three different contexts of "foreign" pottery groups in southern Poland

least connected with ideology. It is worthwhile to underline here, that the analyses presented by Stephen Shennan (1978) had an unquestionable influence on the origin of the discussed conception. Shennan's analyses demonstrated an internal differentiation within the Bell Beaker culture, which is related – at least partially – with the continuation of local traditions (as for example the cremation in the Danubian Csepel group).

For the purpose of the topic discussed here, one can state the following: If the changes detected in pottery stylistics on the whole area of its appearance apply to the same, well defined set of forms, and their appearance did not influence anywhere the general changes in the cultural picture (or the range of changes was everywhere identical), then the "cultural package" conception would be at least an alternative explanation of the process.

DIFFUSION AND PASTORAL COMMUNITIES

Migrations of pastoral communities are a particular kind of human groups' movements, which also must be taken into consideration when analyzing spreading of material culture patterns. In this case, migration is a periodical process rather than a single phenomenon. In prehistoric studies, the possibility has been suggested that some cultural

changes can be explained by the contact between the settled communities and shepherd groups. The role of the latter in the transmission of some patterns of material culture or ideology has also been noticed (eg. Metzner-Nebelsick 1998: 404-411; 2002: 487-489; Pearce, De Guio 1999: 291-292). A potential role of pastoral groups seems obvious when there is only the question of being an intermediary agent in the exchange, i.e. in transporting objects between distant communities. Equally obvious seems the participation of these groups in subsistence strategies of farming populations. However, when we try to explain in this way the transformations in the social structures and ideology, as well as in material culture patterns reflecting them and participating in them, we must remember that some changes are not possible without prior transformations of the economic model of a given socio-cultural system. In other words, it is not possible to adopt the lifestyle, ideology and material culture of the shepherds, while still being earth-bond farmers. It is recognized that each change in a socio-cultural system has its consequences and causes a series of further transformations (e.g. Nowicka 2005: 106-107). In this case, a change in the economic subsystem would result in a change in ideology, which would permit to understand and accept foreign influences. Therefore, it seems that a change in the economic model of the communities subjected to foreign influences is the necessary condition for explaining a specific diffusion case by the dissemination of pastoral ideology and related material culture patterns.

DIFFUSION OF CURRENTS WITH FLUTED POTTERY IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN AND ADJOINING AREAS IN THE 12TH CENTURY BC

The suggestions and objections presented above can be confronted with the observations concerning cultural transformations in the Carpathian Basin during the 12th century BC, that is at the times when the assemblages with Transcarpathian pottery appeared on the above-mentioned sites in southern Poland (compare Przybyła 2009: 65-144 – there further references).

Older phases of the Late Bronze Age in the Carpathian Basin (15th-13th century BC) are the period of a certain stabilization of settlement, manifested, among other things, by the uninterrupted development of local cultural traditions. North-western fringes of the area in question were occupied by the groups attributed to the Tumulus circle, and burying their dead under the mounds of barrows, often together with lavish equipment. In the final phase of the discussed period, the cremation rite becomes popular here (in the so-called Velatice and Čaka cultures), although the traditional grave construction and grave equipment still remain predominant (e.g. Paulík 1963; Kőszegi 1988; Lochner 1991). The southern margin of the Carpathian Basin was occupied by the communities (the Belegiš culture) practicing cremation and partially inhabiting old tell settlements (although with markedly weaker tendency towards the concentration of settlement than was recorded in the Middle Bronze Age) (e.g. Forenbaher 1994; Bukvić 2000). The territories of southern and central Transylvania, as well as Moldavia Upland (lying outside the Carpathian Arc), were encompassed by settlement of the so-called Noua culture (or of syncretic groups uniting the Noua and the earlier Wietenberg culture traditions)

(Gogâltan 2001). These communities rather did not function within a stable settlement network; however, they left small cemeteries with inhumation burials (e.g. Andrițoiu, Vasiliev 1993). The most complex situation is in the northern part of the Great Hungarian Lowland and in the northern Transylvania. The communities developing there had a similar pottery design, combining (to a various degree) the features of the Middle Bronze Age cultures (spiral-knobbed cycle) and those of the Tumulus circle. At that period, on the northern fringes of the Great Hungarian Lowland and on the southern foreground of the West Carpathians there occurred flat cremation cemeteries (the Piliny culture) (Furmánek 1977; Kemenczei 1984: 97-122). Additionally, an important bronze production centre developed there at the same time. Urn cemeteries occur also on the middle Tisza (the Berkesz-Demecser group – Kemenczei 1984: 123-126). Further to the east the grave finds are scarce, but there are recorded settlement complexes. However, most of them indicate brief and weak occupation (e.g. Kacsó 1999). Unique in this region is a group of barrow cemeteries from the Lăpuș Valley (Kacsó 2001). In northern Transylvania another important metallurgic centre was localized.

An analysis of the spread of bronze objects and the occurrence of “foreign” pottery forms and their imitations suggests that a permanent network of long-distance connections developed in the Carpathian Basin in older phases of the Late Bronze Age. In most cases, the picture of the distribution of material culture elements indicates the reciprocal relations, which could be a result of exchange contacts or matrimonial moves rather than mass migration (Fig. 5; see Przybyła 2009: 367-384).

The cultural picture of the Carpathian Basin is totally different in the 12th and 11th centuries BC. At that period we notice spreading of pottery decorated with flutes, characteristic particularly of two currents: the Velatice-Čaka style and the Belegiš II style. The description of spreading of vessel forms typical for the latter style can be the best illustration of the scale and character of transformations observed at the discussed period.

Belegiš II current developed in the area of Syrmia and Vojvodina, where one can investigate the evolution of its specific vessel types, from the forms characteristic of the older phase of the Belegiš culture (Forenbaher 1994). A vessel typical of the Belegiš II style, over the whole area of its occurrence, is a biconical vase with everted rim, decorated with horizontal grooves on the neck and on the body with vertical or oblique flutes, and pairs of knobs heading down- and upwards. Another form popular in this current are bowls with inverted rims, decorated below the rim with horizontal or oblique flutes and with horizontal ribs. From the mid of the 12th century, Belegiš II pottery was spreading over the south-eastern Europe in four directions (Fig. 6). In the Iron Gates region and in western Oltenia such vessels are predominant on the sites which, on the other hand, represent the settlement structures formed in older phases of the Late Bronze Age (Gumă 1995; Motzoi-Chicideanu 2001). Further to the east – in central and eastern part of the Walachia Lowland – the number of sites with fluted pottery is small, and most of them are probably younger (Palincaș 2005). Particularly characteristic is a situation on the territory of Moldavia. Probably already in the 12th century the development of the Noua culture was interrupted there and new settlements (the so-called Kischynev-Corlăteni group) appeared. Inhumation burial rites characteristic of the region gave way to cremation, and local pottery manufacture stylistics was replaced by vessels of the Belegiš II

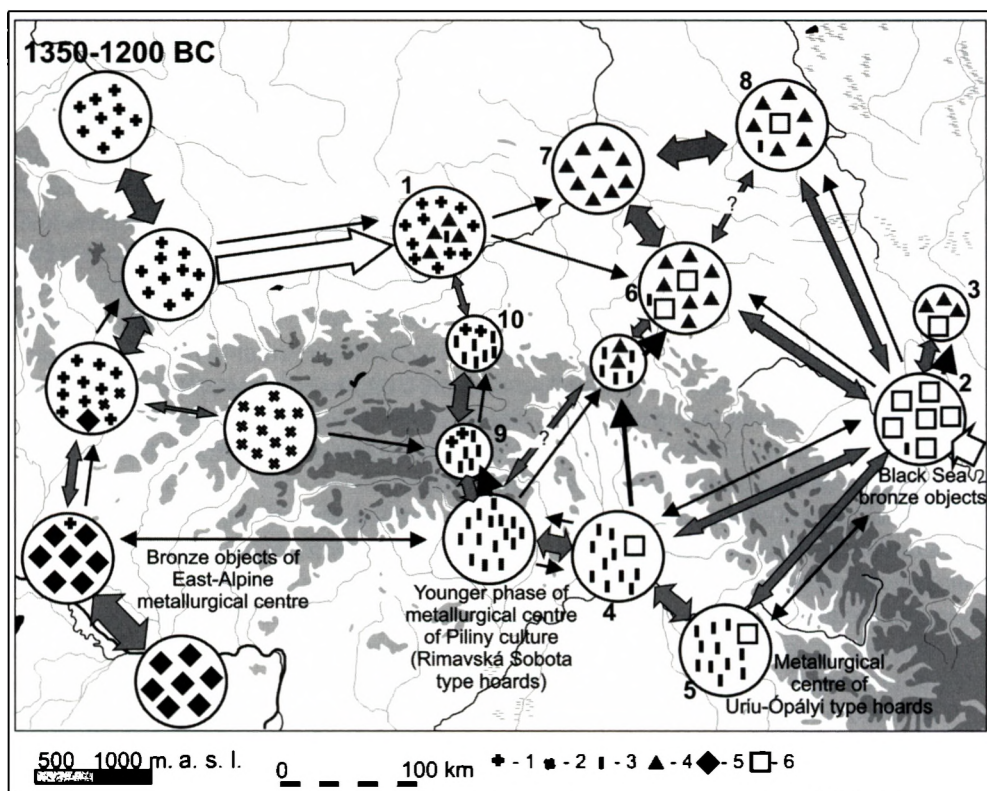


Fig. 5. Supra-regional communication network in the Western Carpathians area in the time preceding the spread of fluted pottery. The circles stand for the regional groups, signatures for the pottery styles and the arrows for the possible directions of a long-distance exchange (particularly marriage exchange) and a distribution of bronze objects. For more details see Przybyła 2009

style (e.g. Levićki 1994). To the south, Belegiš II pottery was spreading along the valley of the Morava River. Its appearance on this territory was also connected with significant changes in local cultural milieu (Stojić 2000). In the west, Belegiš II vessels mark the earliest phase of the exploitation of proto-Villanova phase cemeteries (11th century BC) in north-eastern Italy (e.g. Salzani 1978). To the north, in the 12th century the discussed pottery style reached the territories on the middle and upper Tisza (Szabó 1996). Belegiš II vessels occur in assemblages together with Velatice-Čaka pottery. In some cases one can record the continuous occupation of sites coming from older phases of the Late Bronze Age and the survival of elements of material culture traditions of that period. A part of finds comes from mass pottery deposits in older settlements, and single Belegiš II vessels are known from graves on the Pilińy culture cemeteries (e.g. Kemenczei 1966, Fig. 2). It should be emphasized that the appearance of currents with fluted pottery on the middle Tisza coincides in time with noticeable changes in the cultural picture of this region, including (among other things) the end of some older cultural phenomena

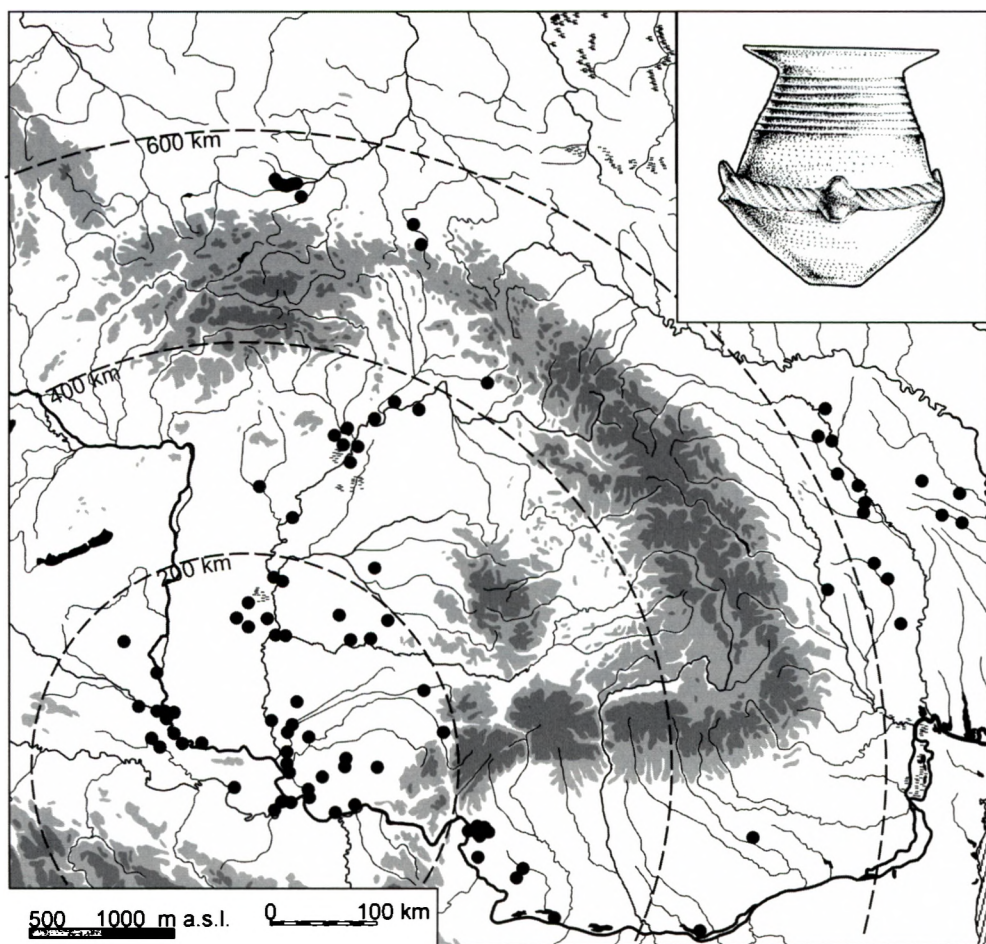


Fig. 6. Distribution of the Belegiš II style's pottery in the Carpathian Basin

(the Berkesz-Demecser group) and the collapse of the north-Transylvanian metallurgic centre, whose “outlets” were in the 12th and 11th centuries dominated by the production coming from the East-Alpine zone.

It does not seem possible to explain the above changes in material culture by the “cultural package” conception. On most of the areas where new currents appeared, they entirely or almost entirely replaced the indigenous tradition of pottery manufacture. Changes are visible also in other aspects of culture. In particular, this process was accompanied by the collapse of earlier settlement structures, and in some regions by changes in burial rite. Although in some cases new currents could spread through exchange or migration of individuals (as was already discussed in more detail for the case of finds from the territory of Poland that mark the northern margin of the phenomena in question), in most situations we can exclude reciprocal relations (Fig. 7), and vessels from the territories influenced by new stylistic currents are exact analogues of the originals

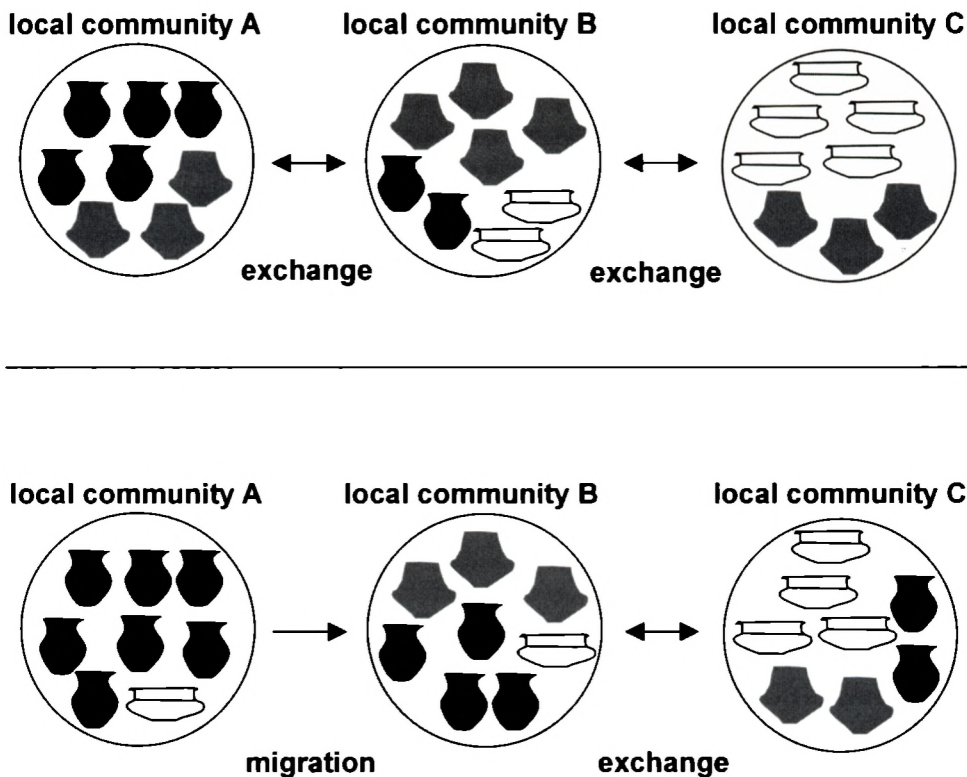


Fig. 7. A model showing the possible differences between exchange and migration reflected in a pattern of spreading of certain styles of pottery

coming from the home areas even several hundred kilometres away. At the same time, the discussed phenomena cannot be connected with periodical movements of pastoral groups. In some cases, e.g. in Moldavia, it seems indeed that with a new current there appeared a tendency to a more settled lifestyle.

On the basis of the above remarks one can suppose that the most probable mechanism inciting this rapid diffusion of a certain set of cultural information remains mass movements of its bearers, which means migrations of the whole groups of people.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FACTORS IN MIGRATIONS IN THE MID OF THE 12TH CENTURY BC

In the sociological conception proposed by Everett S. Lee, migration is most likely to occur when there are two types of factors: positive and negative. Positive (pull) factors include all the information concerning the destination area and encouraging a move, while push factors are negative phenomena in the home region (Anthony 1990: 899, 902).

It can be stated without many doubts that all communities from the Carpathian Basin area could have access to information about distant territories. At the times preceding the changes in the mid of the 12th century BC, there existed a network of intensive exchange contacts, linking different areas of the Danube basin. It is evidenced, among other things, by the products originating from the West Carpathian's metallurgic workshops functioning on the Belegiš culture territory (compare Popović 1996). These connections reached also other regions, where, in the 12th and 11th centuries BC, there appeared groups of fluted pottery from the Carpathian Basin. Already from the 14th century BC, on the territory of the Mycenae culture, the presence of weaponry produced in the Alpine area workshops (or of military units using this weaponry?) is recorded (e.g. Burgess 2001 – there further references). The northern peripheries of the Mycenae culture are one of the areas, where in the 12th or 11th century BC there “appeared” pottery of the Velatice-Čaka style, i.e. a current developed in the East-Alpine zone (Heurtley 1939: 35, 39; Wardle 1980: 242-244; Hänsel 1981: 214; 1989: 188-189, 337; Bouzek 1983: 272-273; Hochstetter 1984: 281-302).

Traditionally, the so-called ecological stress and the resulting deconstruction of socio-cultural systems are regarded as a negative (push) factor. Such direction of reasoning can be also assumed in the case described here. However, we might deal here with a particular case, caused by an ecological cataclysm of a global range. Proceeding from dendrochronological and glaciological research, a sudden, short-lasting drop in temperature, caused probably by a strong volcanic eruption on the northern hemisphere, can be dated to the mid of the 12th century BC (e.g. Hammer et al. 1980; Baillie 1995: 78; 1996; Krapiec 1998: 101-104). This phenomenon can be probably correlated with cultural changes occurring not only in the Carpathian Basin, but also in other parts of Europe (Falkenstein 1997; Przybyła 2006). One can notice here that the consequences of such a global change in the environmental conditions could not only force individual communities to leave their homelands, but also facilitate migration, due to the general breakdown of power structures and lack of consolidation of the communities inhabiting the potential destination areas. In other words, the climatic crisis would generate both the pull and push factors.

One question still remains open: why, in the example described above, the bearers of certain currents (Velatice-Čaka and Belegiš II) took up mass migrations, while the others (e.g. the manufacturers of Tumulus – post-Otomani pottery) under the same initial conditions, remained “the passive observers of events”? It seems that there exists a certain clue which might help in answering this question, although the critics may treat it as explaining one migration by another, equally hypothetical movement. If we accept the old hypothesis (having no reliable alternative until the present days), which posits that the appearance of the Tumulus culture in the Carpathian Basin was a result of migration from the territories on the upper Danube (cf. David 2002: 23-26; Dziegielewski, Przybyła, Gawlik, in this volume), then it should be admitted that the ancestors of the authors and bearers of the Velatice-Čaka and Belegiš II styles took over their lands in consequence of complex processes of movements of various human groups dated to the 17th and 16th centuries BC (in the case of the Belegiš II style one should take into account at least the communities from the East-Alpine zone, having the Early Bronze Age traditions). At that time, the communities from the eastern part of the Tisza basin (i.e., the then emerging groups with Tumulus – post-Otomani pottery) were also the passive witnesses of events,

adapting themselves to new conditions, but not leaving the territories they had occupied for at least several centuries. Although 350-450 years might have passed between these events and the processes from the mid of the 12th century, it cannot be excluded that the memory of common wandering remained in the ideological subsystem of certain communities, and that under certain conditions it facilitated the decision to migrate (by surely very numerous decisions, made on the level of small, local populations) (cf. paper by S. Kadrow, in this volume). This memory might be built around a small group of original migrants. Reinhard Wenskus (1961) has described such situation in the early historical Europe in his 'kernel of tradition' concept.

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